

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3892
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LENINGRAD 00168

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, PGOV, PINT, SHUM, SREF, CGEN, CVIS, CPAS, UR
SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF REPRESENTATION LIST IN LENINGRAD
OVIR

REF: LENINGRAD 57

1. SUMMARY: CONSUL GENERAL USED OCCASION OF COURTESY CALL ON JANUARY 19 ON HEAD OF CENTRAL OVIR FOR LENINGRAD CITY AND OBLAST (COL. V. P. BOKOV) TO TRY AND SHAKE LOOSE SOME OF OUR REPRESENTATION LIST CASES (REFTEL), OR AT LEAST DETERMINE WHAT IS HOLDING THEM UP. WE LEFT MODERATELY ENCOURAGED THAT WE MAY SEE SOME MOVEMENT THIS YEAR, BUT NOT IN THE LONGSTANDING CASE OF FELIX ARONOVICH OR NEW CASE OF SERAFIMA OKLADNIKOVA (REFTEL). END SUMMARY.

2. ON CG'S INITIATIVE, THE CASES WERE INITIALLY DISCUSSED IN THE LARGER CONTEXT OF US-SOVIET RELATIONS: THE TENDENCY FOR U.S. PUBLIC TO SEE THESE CASES IN LIGHT OF OUR OWN BELIEFS AND EXPERIENCE AS LAND OF IMMIGRANTS; OUR RESIDUAL BAD CONSCIENCE THAT MORE WAS NOT DONE AT TIME TO HELP INDIVIDUAL VICTIMS OF HITLERISM AND "CULT OF PERSONALITY"; CORRESPONDING CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS ABROAD REFLECTED IN LANGUAGE OF HELSINKI ACCORD; TENDENCY .
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FOR WESTERN PUBLIC TO GENERALIZE ABOUT NATURE OF SOVIET . POLICY AND INTENTIONS FROM SOVIET BEHAVIOUR IN THESE SEPARATE HUMAN CASES; FACT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER IS ADDRESSING REAL CONCERN OF AMERICAN PEOPLE, WHICH AFFECTS HIS ABILITY TO MOVE FORWARD IN DIFFICULT AREAS OF US-SOVIET RELATIONS, WHEN HE RAISES HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES; AND HOW IMPORTANT IT IS. TO ELIMINATE THESE IRRITANTS IN OUR RELATIONS SO THAT WE

CAN MOVE AHEAD ON MORE SUBSTANTIVE AREAS OF NEGOTIATIONS. BOKOV COMPLAINED AT CG'S PUTTING CASES IN THIS LARGER CONTEXT, BUT INSISTED THAT USSR WOULD FULFILL TERMS OF HELSINKI ACCORD, THOUGH SIDES MIGHT DIFFER OVER INTERPRETATIONS OF THE AGREEMENT.

3. CG EXPRESSED PLEASURE THAT SOME PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE OVER PAST YEAR IN RESOLVING TWENTY-ONE CASES ON REPRESENTATION LIST, INCLUDING ONE IN LENINGRAD, BUT PROVIDED BOKOV WITH LIST OF NINE OUTSTANDING CASES, DRAWING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO CASE OF ARONOVICH AND THAT OF OKLADNIKOVA (NOT YET ON REP. LIST).

-- WHILE BOKOV DECLINED COMMENT ON OKLADNIKOVA CASE, DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE OF DIPLOMATIC AGENCY, CHERNOV, SCOFFED AT SUGGESTION USSR SHOULD BE HELPFUL TO MAN WHO RAN AWAY FROM FAMILY AND MOTHERLAND. CERTAINLY, WE WERE GIVEN NO ENCOURAGEMENT.

-- IN ARONOVICH CASE, CG PROVIDED BOKOV WITH COPY OF LETTER SENT HEAD OF DIPLOMATIC AGENCY ENCLOSING MEDICAL REPORT ON RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIS MOTHER'S DETERIORATING HEALTH AND HER SON'S PLIGHT. BAKOV CLAIMED SYMPATHY FOR ARONOVICH, WITH WHOM HE SAID HE HAD MET FREQUENTLY. HE SAID ARONOVICH "WILL LEAVE" BUT WHEN IS UP TO REVIEW BY SPECIALISTS WHO MUST DETERMINE WHAT INFORMATION IS NO LONGER SENSITIVE. BOKOV VENTURED THAT THIS PERIOD WILL NOT BE MORE THAN THREE YEARS, AND HE DID NOT ENTIRELY DISCOURAGE CG WHEN HE PROBED WHETHER PERIOD MIGHT NOT BE LESS, E.G., EIGHTEEN MONTHS.

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SITIVE. BOKOV VENTURED THAT THIS PERIOD WILL NOT BE MORE THAN THREE YEARS, AND HE DID NOT ENTIRELY DISCOURAGE CG WHEN HE PROBED WHETHER PERIOD MIGHT NOT BE LESS, E.G., EIGHTEEN MONTHS.

-- BOKOV CLAIMED THAT SECURITY IS ONLY GROUNDS FOR NOT ALLOWING PERSON RIGHT TO EMIGRATE. HE WOULD NOT, HOWEVER, DISCUSS DETAILS OF OTHER CASES ON REPRESENTATION LIST WHEN CG EXPRESSED STRONG DOUBT THAT THEY ALL FELL WITHIN THIS SECURITY CATEGORY.

4. CG TRIED AT SOME LENGTH TO GET BOKOV TO DEFINE LEGAL BASIS AND PARAMETERS OF LAW WHICH ARE USED IN EMIGRATION REQUEST CASES AND TO SAY WHETHER WE COULD SEE ANY PERTINENT DOCUMENTS. BOKOV CONFUSEDLY CLAIMED THERE WAS A LEGAL BASIS FOR EMIGRATION DECISION; IT WAS NOT SECRET, BUT WE COULD NOT SEE IT. WHEREUPON CHERNOV CAME TO HIS RESCUE TO ARGUE THAT THE HANDLING OF THE CASES REFLECTED INTERNAL ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS AND THAT THE USSR DECIDED LIKE EVERY COUNTRY WHICH OF ITS "PODZAKONNYE" INSTRUCTIONS COULD BE MADE PUBLIC.

5. ACCORDING TO BOKOV, THE BASIC DECISIONS ON EMIGRATION .
ARE NOT MADE BY OVIR BUT RATHER BY COMMISSIONS WHICH CON-
SIDER WHAT THE PETITIONER HAS DONE AND WHETHER IT IS
"DESIRABLE" TO PERMIT THAT PERSON TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY.
CHERNOV EXPLAINED UNDER PRODDING THAT THE QUESTION OF .
WHETHER THE PETITIONER HAS HAD ACCESS TO SECRET INFORMATION,
AND WHEN THAT INFORMATION MAY BECOME OBSOLETE, ARE DECIDED
BY EXPERTS WHO WORK WITH THOSE COMMISSIONS. BOTH BOKOV
AND CHERNOV INSISTED THAT THERE WAS NOT, AND NEVER HAD BEEN,
A SPECIFIC NUMBER OF YEARS (E.G., FIVE CITED BY CG) AFTER
A PETITIONER LEAVES SENSITIVE WORK WHICH MAKES THE PERSON
ELIGIBLE FOR EMIGRATION. THEY MADE CLEAR THAT HEAVY EM-
PHASIS IS PLACED ON INFORMATION AND OPINIONS GATHERED FROM
THE PLACE OF WORK.
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LENINGRAD 00168

6. BOKOV SOUGHT TO PUT A VERY POSITIVE FACE ON MEETING
WITH CG, ARGUING THAT MOST OF PAST PETITIONERS HAVE BEEN
GRANTED VISAS, THAT HE WOULD LOOK INTO CASES ON LIST SUB-
MITTED BY CG, AND (IN NOT VERY HAPPY METAPHOR) SAID WE
SHOULD BE OPTIMISTS AND REGARD HALF-FILLED BOTTLE AS HALF-
FULL RATHER THAN HALF-EMPTY. AFTER ALL, THERE ARE ONLY
NINE CASES IN CITY OF FOUR MILLION. IN FACT, HE CONVEYED.
IMPRESSION THAT AT LEAST SOME PETITIONERS ON LIST WILL
RECEIVE POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THEIR VISA REQUESTS.

7. DISCUSSION OF INTERNAL PROCEDURES TENDED TO CONFIRM
REPORTS WE HAVE HEARD THAT EMIGRATION PETITIONS ARE DECIDED
BY SPECIAL COMMISSIONS REPRESENTING VARIOUS INTERESTS AND
WORKING WITH CLEARANCES FROM ALL INSTITUTIONS WITH WHICH
THE PETITIONER HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED. BOKOV AND CHERNOV
DENIED CG'S SUGGESTION THAT THIS SYSTEM LEAVES FATE OF
INDIVIDUAL IN HANDS OF PERSONS WHO MAY HAVE PERSONAL GRUDGE
AGAINST HIM ("SUBJECTIVISM IS OUT OF QUESTION"). IN FACT,
HOWEVER, MOST LOCAL BUREAUCRATS WILL BE INCLINED TO PLAY
IT SAFE AND NOT MOVE ON ANY EVEN REMOTELY CONTROVERSIAL
PETITION UNTIL ORDERED TO DO SO FROM ABOVE. IT FOLLOWS THAT
REGULAR HIGH-LEVEL REPRESENTATIONS ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO
COMPEL HIGH-LEVEL INTEREST IN INDIVIDUAL CASES ENTRAPPED
IN THE BUREAUCRATIC MORASS. BUCHANAN
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